

**STATE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
DOVER, DELAWARE**

**THURSDAY, April 13, 2017**

The April monthly meeting of the Delaware State Human Relations Commission was held by video-conference the Cannon Building, 861 Silver Lake Boulevard, Conference Room A, Dover, Delaware; and the Carvel Building, 820 N. French Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Arts Conference Room, Wilmington, Delaware.

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**Attendance:**

**Commission Members Present** Chairperson Calvin Christopher. Commissioners Mashoor Awad, Jamaal Bivens, Diaz Bonville, Whittona Burrell, Erika Caesar, Chok-Fun Chui, Bernice Edwards, Stephen Elkins, Earnest Gulab, Kerri Harris, Jordan Hines, Prameela Kaza, Gail Launay-Tarlecki, Nancy Maihoff, Lorenzo Murdaugh, Olga Ramirez, Walter Smith Jr., Roy Sudler Jr., Rosemarie Williams, and Dolores Finger Wright. DAG Zoe Plerhoples.

**Commission Members not present:** Commissioners Michael J. Harpe (excused), Rose Mary Hendrix (excused), Doug James (excused), Janet Maull-Martin (excused) and Robert Watson Jr. (excused).

**Staff from Division of Human Relations Office:** Romona Fullman, Vincent Petroff, Natalie Fountain and Kelly Fox.

**Members of the public present:** Jim Higgins.

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**I Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Christopher at 5:40 p.m. followed by a period of silent meditation.

**II Approval of Minutes**

The minutes for the March SHRC meeting were submitted. A motion was made to accept the minutes by Commissioner Ramirez. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hines. A vote was taken, motion carries with no opposition.

**III Members of the Public Present**

No expressions.

#### IV Chair's Report

<i>Topic / Discussion</i>	<i>Actions to be Taken</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
<p><u>Fair Housing Month</u> – Topic deferred to the Director's Report.</p>			
<p><u>Joint Legislative Oversight and Sunset Committee (JLOSC)</u> – Chair Christopher reported that the JLOSC voted and approved 7 recommendations to the SHRC enabling legislation. A handout outlining the recommendations was distributed at the meeting, and Chair Christopher read each recommendation aloud.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 1</b> - Commission shall continue, subject to any further recommendations adopted by the JLOCS.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 2</b> - The Commission shall provide to JLOSC proposed amendments to its Governing statute to reduce the size of the Commission from 28 members to a number JLOSC determines.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 3</b> – The Commission shall provide to JLOSC proposed amendments to its governing statute to include quorum language.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 4</b> – The Commission shall provide to JLOSC proposed amendments to its governing statute to include language standard to boards and commissions as it relates to removing Commissioners.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 5</b> – The Commission shall make every effort to add a video location, which will allow for Sussex County members and public to participate in meetings.</p>			

<p><b>Recommendation 6</b> - The Commission shall provide to JLOSC proposed amendments to its governing statute to include references to its powers and duties in Chapter 45. Title 6 (Equal Accommodations), and Chapter 46, Title 6 (Fair Housing Act.) For example, add to &amp;3004, Title 31, the following: “(4) Fulfill its duties as provided in Chapter 45 of Title 6”</p> <p><b>Recommendation 7</b> – The Commission shall be released from review (upon the enactment of recommended and/all legislation).</p> <p>Chair Christopher invited discussion on Recommendation #2 regarding the reduction in the membership of from the current 28 members to 18. He advised the number recommended is not a matter of discussion at this time. However the method used to reduce the size of the Commission is to be determined.</p> <p>DAG Plerhoples advised that the JLSOC has requested a timeline for completion be submitted with the draft legislation that is to be submitted.</p> <p>Chair Christopher reported the process of reducing the size of the Commission will be done openly, fairly, with dignity and consistency.</p> <p>Various methods to achieve the number of 18 were discussed by Commissioners. Following discussion the specific method of how this will be achieved was not defined. A timeline for completion of recommendations to be submitted with proposed legislation was set following a motion from Commissioner Caesar that the timeline is 1 year from enactment of legislation.</p>			
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<p>Commissioner Hines seconded the motion. Following discussion a vote was taken.</p> <p>21 Commissioners were present for the vote. All in favor and 1 abstention.</p>			
<p><u>Homeless Bill of Rights</u> – Chair Christopher advised the Homeless Bill of Rights (HB49) is being considered. Enforcement of this would be placed under the Division of Human Relations and the State Human Relations Commission. A discussion took place concerning whether the Commission will support the proposed legislation. DAG Plerhoples expressed some concerns over possible legal ramifications of portions of this bill being in conflict of the criminal code.</p> <p>When another version of this bill was considered there was a suggestion was to perhaps consider adding homelessness as a protected class.</p> <p>Commissioner Elkins inquired if there was an inclusion for additional revenue for the Division/Commission with the bill. DAG Plerhoples advised there currently is no fiscal note attached to the bill. She also advised that one can be requested.</p> <p>Chair Christopher asked if Commissioners felt they had enough information to make a determination on supporting this bill. DAG Plerhoples requested Commissioners email herself and DAG Jarosz with questions concerning the bill.</p>	<p>Commissioners contact DAG Plerhoples and DAG Jarosz with questions.</p>	<p>All Commissioners</p>	<p>Undefined</p>

## V Director's Report

<i>Topic / Discussion</i>	<i>Actions to be Taken</i>	<i>Leaders</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
A printed copy of the Director's Report was provided to Commissioners.			
JLOCS – Director Fullman advised the Division is attempting to track Commissioner attendance (monthly meetings) and community engagement (training, legislative hearings, film and discussions, fairs/festivals, etc.). The monthly director's report will reflect known Commissioner community engagement activities.			
<p><u>Proposed Legislation</u> – Director Fullman advised there are details concerning 3 bills related to our work in the Director's Report. She encouraged Commissioners to be aware of proposed legislation and the effect on the Division/Commission. She suggested this bills be considered by the SHRC Legislative Committee.</p> <p>SB 49 Homeless Individual's Bill of Rights - provides rights to protections for individuals experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>HB 90 Early Voting - This bill will be allowed to vote in-person for at least 10 days prior to an election.</p> <p>SB 27 Redistricting - To establish more transparency in this bill establishes an Independent Redistricting Commission for the State of Delaware.</p>			
<u>Fair Housing Month</u> – Director Fullman advised that the Division is excited to announce a new initiative- Fair Housing Month Billboards - one in each county. Details to the locations of the billboards were provided to all Commissioners. She expressed that we are delighted and appreciative of the support and			

<p>sponsorship received from our local fair housing partners.</p> <p><u>DHR Fair Housing Summit</u> – scheduled for Tuesday, April 25, 2017 from 9:00 am – 3:30 pm at the Buena Vista State Conference Center. She encouraged Commissioners to attend and share invitation externally.</p>	<p>Attend Fair Housing Summit. Share invitation externally.</p>	<p>All Commissioners</p>	<p>April 25, 2017</p>
<p><u>Hate Crime Forum</u> – Director Fullman shared details for a Hate Crime Prevention Forum taking place on Wednesday, May 3 at 6:30 pm. A flyer was provided to all Commissioners.</p>			
<p><u>Racial Equity Community Café</u> – Natalie Fountain, Commissioners Maihoff and Chui have worked with Community groups in Dover to put together a Racial Equity Community Café on Saturday, April 22 from 9:45 am – 2:00 pm at Wesley College. Support is requested from Commissioners for the event.</p>	<p>Contact Commissioners Maihoff and Chui to provide support.</p>	<p>All Commissioners</p>	<p>Prior to April 22, 2017</p>
<p>Director Fullman shared that Natalie Fountain’s contract will expire at the end of June. Additional funding would be needed to continue the contract.</p>			
<p>Additional Community engagement activities are included in the printed Director’s Report.</p>			

## VI Committee Reports

<i>Topic / Discussion</i>	<i>Actions to be Taken</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
<p><u>Public Awareness Committee (PAW)</u> – Chair Christopher advised an appointment for Chair of this Committee has been tabled pending the reduction in Commission members. No report from the Public</p>			

Awareness Committee. Chair Christopher asked if other Committee members had a report. No report.			
<u>Legislative Committee (LEG)</u> – Commissioner Harpe is the Chair of the Legislative Committee. He is excused from the meeting this evening. Chair Christopher asked if other Committee members had a report. No report.			
<p><u>Community Response Committee (CRC)</u> – Commissioner Maihoff reported the Committee held a meeting at 5:00 this evening and interviewed Jim Higgins for possible Commission membership.</p> <p>The Committee continues to work on the development of a Commission mentor manual. The Committee hopes to have it up and running by the end of summer.</p> <p>Commissioner Maihoff encouraged Commissioners to attend the Racial Equity Community Café on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.</p> <p>Natalie Fountain reported that this is a collaborative effort between Restoring Central Dover, the Delaware Human Relations Commission, Wesley College, and Delaware State University. She will send the invitation via email and asked that Commissioners register via Eventbrite.</p>	<p>Attend Racial Equity Community Café</p> <p>Send invitation electronically</p>	<p>All available Commissioners</p> <p>Natalie Fountain</p>	<p>April 22, 2017</p> <p>Undefined</p>
<u>Governor’s Council on Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (GCEEO)</u> – Commissioner Launay-Tarlecki reported the Committee did not have a meeting this month and has not met since February. At this time there is no meeting scheduled for May. Commissioner Launay-Tarlecki is inquiring on the status of the Committee. She will communicate additional details as			

she receives them.			
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## VII Old Business

<i>Topic / Discussion</i>	<i>Actions to be Taken</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Commissioner Kerri Harris reported she has been working to establish a forum for the groups associated with the Delaware Civil Rights Coalition to meet and discuss policy and legislation they are pushing. She is seeking additional Commissioners to assist in the process. Commissioners Caesar and Burrell volunteered to assist.			

## VIII New Business

<i>Topic / Discussion</i>	<i>Actions to be Taken</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
<p>Commissioner Awad communicated a concern over comments made by Senator Dave Lawson regarding the invocation that was read by members of the Muslim community on the House floor on Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. A motion was made by Commissioner Sudler and seconded by Commissioner Awad to utilize an existing letter of support to be sent to media outlets and all legislators. Following discussion a vote was taken, motion carries with no opposition.</p> <p>Commissioner Awad also shared the Muslim community will be hosting a Muslim-American Community Rally on Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm. on the Green in front of Legislative Hall in Dover. Commissioner Awad will communicate additional information concerning participating in the event when it is available.</p>			



**IX    Good News**

<i>Topic / Discussion</i>	<i>Actions to be Taken</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Commissioner Awad shared his son is graduating from American University in May. He has accepted a position with a financial institution in New York.			

**XI    Meeting Adjourned**

The Commission meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 p.m. by Chair Christopher.